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INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE  
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2449  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 5943  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 9506  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 7133  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 4771  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2872  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 RANGOON 000105

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/MLS, AND IO  
PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/25/2020

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SUBJECT: BURMA: NATIONAL LEAGUE FOR DEMOCRACY LEADERS ON  
ELECTIONS, ASSISTANCE

REF: RANGOON 92

Classified By: P/E Chief Jennifer Harhigh for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

Summary

1. (C) During a February 24 meeting with the Charge, National League for Democracy (NLD) Central Executive Committee (CEC) members, including recently released Vice-Chair U Tin Oo, reported they are renewing a request to the Government of Burma (GOB) for the full CEC to meet party leader Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK). The NLD views this meeting as crucial; the CDA observed it remains a high priority for the U.S. as well. The CEC was heartened by UN Special Rapporteur Ojea Quintana's frank assessment of the lack of GOB progress on human rights and his prediction the 2010 elections are unlikely to be credible. The Uncles repeated that the party has yet to decide its stance vis-a-vis the elections, and the conversation re-confirmed divergent views on that issue within the CEC. The Uncles reaffirmed support for increased U.S. humanitarian assistance to the people of Burma and welcomed the idea of a USAID mission in Rangoon, recognizing it is necessary to ensure transparency and monitoring of U.S. taxpayer money. End summary.

Welcoming U Tin Oo Back to CEC

2. (C) The Charge opened the February 24 session at NLD headquarters by noting the USG is thankful U Tin Oo is now free and able to participate in party activities. The CDA stressed that the U.S. seeks the release of all of Burma's political prisoners as a top priority. U Tin Oo agreed freedom for political prisoners, including ASSK, is of crucial importance. It is also necessary for ASSK to be able to meet freely with the CEC. The CDA agreed: the USG continually pushes the GOB to allow a meeting between ASSK and the full CEC at a mutually acceptable location. This factored prominently during A/S Campbell's November visit to Burma, and we continue to make clear to the GOB such a meeting is in the interests of all, including the senior generals. U Tin Oo said such strong advocacy by the United States heartens the NLD in its struggle for democracy.

## NLD to Request (Again) Meeting Between ASSK and CEC

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13. (C) U Tin Oo revealed that the NLD is preparing to send another request to Burmese authorities for an ASSK/CEC meeting, specifying U Tin Oo (released from house arrest February 13) needs to participate.

### Ojea Quintana Visit

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14. (C) The Charge asked the Uncles' views on the recently concluded visit by UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights Ojea Quintana. U Tin Oo was pleased that Ojea Quintana clearly stated the regime has made no progress on human rights issues. Win Tin described Ojea Quintana's assessment that the elections could not be free and fair, given developments to date, as "a great message to the world." The Uncles seemed pleased Ojea Quintana will seek to return later this year. Win Tin expressed disappointment that Ojea Quintana met with Uncles at a government hotel rather than at NLD headquarters.

### Uncles Share Views on Elections

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15. (C) Noting we have heard rumors, purportedly from credible sources, that the elections could be held as early as May, the CDA solicited the Uncles' views on providing

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civic education about elections to Burma's people. Should international donors attempt to educate the public about how a free and fair election should look? Nyunt Wai said it would be necessary to make clear any such education is not intended to bolster the SPDC; any messages would need to be neutral and informative. He observed, as he has in the past, that electronic voting equipment could be useful in preventing manipulation of ballots. The Charge noted it surely would be impossible to convert all of Burma to electronic voting in 2010.

16. (C) Khin Maung Swe inquired about the likely reaction of the international community to elections if the NLD decides not to participate. The CDA predicted some countries will likely applaud the election effort no matter what the conditions or outcomes, while others such as the United States will likely want to carefully analyze the process, including who gets to compete and what the rules are.

17. (C) U Tin Oo reaffirmed that the NLD has not yet decided its position on the elections. The CDA recognized the party faces a difficult decision. There are pluses and minuses with any approach but it makes sense to know the rules of the game before deciding.

18. (C) Win Tin said the CEC has a duty to the people to stand by the NLD's Shwegondaing Declaration, which was adopted by a party conference. He said the GOB must acknowledge the 1990 election and remedy the 2008 constitution if the NLD is to participate. Khin Maung Shwe countered that the Shwegondaing Declaration is not an ultimatum, but a policy. It must be discussed with the people. The CDA recalled ASSK's comments to A/S Campbell last year that the party must be both idealistic and practical in politics. All assembled agreed it is critical ASSK be allowed to meet with the full CEC as soon as possible.

### Uncles Welcome More Assistance, USAID Mission

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19. (SBU) Turning to assistance issues, the Charge noted, as he has in the past, USG plans, with Congressional agreement, to regularize an increase in bilateral assistance to Burma, including beyond the Delta if possible, to help people

rebuild their lives and strengthen civil society. The Charge observed that implementing and monitoring such assistance will require additional staff, including to ensure aid does not go to or through the GOB. Toward that end, and asking the Uncles not to mention it to the media, the Charge advised that we are looking to open a USAID Mission in Rangoon, just as the UK and Australia did some years ago.

¶10. (SBU) U Tin Oo responded on behalf of the Uncles. He sought, and received, clarification that the assistance money comes from the American taxpayer. As such, he continued, it is "good and correct" to ensure the money is distributed transparently to those in need and is properly monitored. U Tin Oo noted the GOB worries about foreign assistance benefiting opposition parties; the CDA replied that the intended assistance, including more than USD 20 million planned for FY2010, is humanitarian and civil-society building in nature and is not intended for political organizations. U Tin Oo made clear the CEC recognizes the need for USAID staff in country as it is important to have the "proper organization to monitor and ensure transparency." All of the CEC members present appeared to welcome the idea of a USAID Mission to oversee increased assistance and nodded their heads in agreement.

No News on Supreme Court Verdict  
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¶11. (C) In response to the Charge's inquiry about when the Supreme Court might issue its verdict in ASSK's pending

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appeal, U Tin Oo replied that there has been a delay, but the Court has not given any explanation.

Comment  
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¶12. (C) We are encouraged by the Uncles' apparently unified support for our efforts to provide and monitor increased assistance. As in the past, the discussion of the elections was less than conclusive. Clearly divisions continue among the Uncles regarding the merits of participation. The longer the party is restricted from meeting with ASSK, the less time it will have to consolidate views and decide on an approach. The Uncles greatly value the USG's insistence on a near-term, inclusive CEC meeting with ASSK at a mutually acceptable location.  
DINGER